

## Message Text

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ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 SS-07 ISO-00 EA-06 NSC-06 SSO-00 NSCE-00 H-01

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O 020510Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4955

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5090

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (MANSFIELD, MIKE), LA

SUBJ: CODEL MANSFIELD

REF: STATE 182835

1. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN SENATOR MANSFIELD AND PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA, WE MUST RECOMMEND STRONGLY AGAINST ANY VISIT BY THE SENATOR AT THIS TIME FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS:

A. SOUVANNA'S POWER IS VASTLY DIMINISHED AND HE IS NO LONGER CALLING THE SHOTS. ANY DISCUSSIONS MANSFIELD MIGHT HAVE WITH HIM WOULD INEVITABLY HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT CURRENT PROBLEMS CREATED BY PGNU FOR THIS MISSION; ON THESE PROBLEMS SOUVANNA HAS USUALLY TAKEN CORRECT POSITIONS, BUT HIS ORDERS ARE NOT IMPLEMENTED. TO REMIND HIM OF THIS FACT WOULD ONLY CAUSE HIM EMBARRASSMENT.

B. TO BE USEFUL, VISIT SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE MEETING WITH RANKING LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT (LPF) OFFICIAL, ACTING FONMIN PHOUNE SIPASEUTH. IN VIEW OF SENATOR MANSFIELD'S STATURE, HOWEVER, LPF LEADERS COULD MISINTERPRET VISIT AS INDICATION THAT USG HAD DECIDED TO FORGIVE AND FORGET THE HARASSMENTS OF THE LAST THREE MONTHS, AND PERHAPS EVEN THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO RESUME AID.

C. WHILE SOUVANNA HIMSELF MIGHT NOT RAISE QUESTION, ANY OTHER LAO WHO HAD A CRACK AT THE  
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SENATOR WOULD BE APT TO RAISE QUESTIONS OF FUTURE AID

AND PERHAPS OF AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE STONE'S NON-ARRIVAL  
-- ISSUES WHICH DEPARTMENT EVIDENTLY DOES NOT WANT SURFACED  
AT THIS TIME.

D. WHILE SENATOR MANSFIELD PRESUMABLY WOULD NOT  
BE OVERLY INTERESTED IN PRESS COVERAGE, IT NOW SEEMS  
UNLIKELY THAT ANY AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS WOULD BE ADMITTED  
TO LAOS TO COVER HIS VISIT, GIVEN REFUSAL OF VISAS EARLIER  
THIS WEEK TO GRAY OF AP AND ANDELMAN OF NY TIMES AND  
LIKELIHOOD THAT FURTHER REFUSALS ARE IN STORE. FOR SENATOR  
MANSFIELD TO COME WHEN U.S. CORRESPONDENTS ARE BEING DENIED  
ADMISSION SEEMS TO US INCONSISTENT AND BASICALLY WRONG.

E. SOUVANNA DEPARTED VIENTIANE FOR LUANG PRABANG  
JULY 31 APPARENTLY WITHOUT SPECIFYING ANY DATE OF RETURN;  
WE HAVE HEARD THAT HE INTENDS TO SPEND AS LONG AS TWO WEEKS  
THERE, ALTHOUGH WE SUPPOSE THAT HE MIGHT RETURN SPECIALLY  
TO VIENTIANE IN ORDER TO RECEIVE SENATOR MANSFIELD. EVEN  
FLIGHT INTO VIENTIANE PRESENTS SUFFICIENT RISK (SEE  
BELOW), AND WE CANNOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE RECOMMEND THAT  
THE SENATOR ATTEMPT TO TRAVEL TO LUANG PRABANG IN RAINY  
SEASON AND CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE EVEN IF HE WERE TO BE  
FURNISHED APPROPRIATE SMALLER AIRCRAFT BY US MILITARY IN  
THAILAND.

2. FOREGOING REPRESENT ARGUMENTS AGAINST VISIT BY  
SENATOR MANSFIELD. ONLY ARGUMENT IN FAVOR THAT WE CAN  
PERCIEVE, AND WE THINK IT A MARGINAL ONE, IS THAT SOUVANNA  
MIGHT DERIVE SOME ENCOURAGEMENT AND BOOST IN MORALE FROM  
SEEING THE SENATOR. HOWEVER, SOUVANNA IS SCHEDULED TO  
DEPART LAOS FOR FRANCE APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS LATER  
(AUGUST 29), AND IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT HIS POLITICAL IMPORTANCE  
WILL DECLINE EVEN MORE THE MINUTE HE LEAVES THE COUNTRY.

3. THE CRUX OF THE MATTER IS THAT THE LAO  
LEADERSHIP, PARTICULARLY LPF, WOULD RECEIVE FOR THE FIRST  
TIME AN AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT OF THE VIEW OF CONGRESS ON  
INDOCHINA. THE VALUE OF THE VISIT THEN FINALLY COMES DOWN  
TO WHAT THE SENATOR WOULD SAY. IF HE TOOK AN UNEQUIVOCAL  
POSITION WITH REGARD TO AID (WHICH IS THE KEY ISSUE), IT  
WOULD TEAR AWAY ALL AMBIGUITY ON FUTURE U.S. INTENTIONS AND,  
IN OUR JUDGMENT, ELIMINATE ALL CHANCES OF COMPROMISED  
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SOLUTIONS OVER OUR IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS AND PROBABLY INCREASE  
PRESSURES ON MISSION. IF ON OTHER HAND SENATOR TOOK  
SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE AND DANGLED POSSIBILITIES OF FUTURE  
AID, IT WOULD CONFIRM LPF'S SELF-ASSURANCE THAT THEY  
HAVE FOLLOWED CORRECT LINE AND THAT US WOULD GIVE  
REGARDLESS OF THE INDIGNITIES HEAPED UPON IT. IT SEEMS  
TO US THAT THIS IS A NO-WIN CASE. THE SENATOR'S VISIT  
CAN ONLY CONFUSE SITUATION AND OUR RELATIONS; IT CANNOT

ALTER BASIC FACT THAT, FOR THE PRESENT, US IS NOT PREPARED TO CONSIDER FUTURE AID.

4. WATTAY AIRPORT CAN ACCOMMODATE A VC-135. HOWEVER, UNRELIABILITY OF NAVAIDS NECESSITATES RESTRICTION TO VFR OPERATIONS ONLY. BASIC AIRPORT SPECIFICATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS: FIELD ELEVATION 559 FEET MSL; RWY 13/31, 9,800 FEET X 140 FEET WITH SWL 88/TDT 800 WEIGHT-BEARING CAPACITY.

5. REGARDING ENTRY, WE BELIEVE WE COULD OBTAIN DIPLOMATIC CLEARANCE FOR AIRCRAFT, ASSURANCE THAT DISSIDENT RAL EMPLOYEES WOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO SEIZE IT, AND PROBABLY WAIVER OF VISA REQUIREMENT FOR SENATOR AND HIS IMMEDIATE ENTOURAGE. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT ANY CORRESPONDENTS (AT LEAST ANY KNOWN TO PGNU) WHOM SENATOR MIGHT INVITE TO ACCOMPANY HIM WOULD BE ADMITTED.

6. PLEASE ADVISE SENATOR'S DECISION SOONEST AND, IF HE NEVERTHELESS WISHES TO COME, REPEAT REFTEL, THIS TEL, AND ANY SUBSEQUENT TRAFFIC TO EMBASSY BANGKOK.  
CHAPMAN

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